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Compiled, for the twenty-ninth year,
by Juanita Warner

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genotypes (the complete set of genes an individual inherits from its parents). Therefore, patience is a necessary key to attaining your goals. When I began breeding, I took my two females to two well-known grand champion males. The results were disasterous—ten very pet quality kits—each one worse than the next. I tried again, however, this time reversing the pairings; and I noticed a definite improvement and knew I was on the right track."

Contrary to what many breeders think, being on the right track doesn't mean you've automatically established a line. Joan is particularly amused by one-grand wonders, "who breed one good cat, maybe even make a national, and then go running around the show halls bragging about 'my line.'

"A breeder must develop a distinctive look to his stock, produce offspring that can be recognized anywhere as coming from his cattery, and be able to repeat this strain with reasonable regularity before he can say he's got a line of his own."

Joan believes a combination of line breeding, inbreeding, and outcrossing is essential to a progressive breeding program. "Initially I worked with inbred lines and then chose breeding partners from them to develop my own line. There are two main advantages to inbreeding: it enables you to identify hidden (recessive) defects quickly, and it permits you to fix certain desirable traits in your line because it increases homozygosity (having identical pairs of genes for any given pair of characteristics).

"A disadvantage of inbreeding is that faults are as easily fixed as good points. In addition, continual inbreeding can lower fertility, produce larger numbers of stillborn kittens, lead to dwarfism, and diminish vitality.

"Outcrossing, on the other hand, while it will help remove unwanted recessives, also nullifies the pure qualities achieved by inbreeding."

Joan has definite ideas about a cat's main purpose in life. "Our cats should be pets first and foremost. It's a waste of time breeding good temperament into a cat and then never allowing the animal the chance to express it. A continuously caged cat rarely exhibits that extra pizzazz—in the show ring or anywhere else.

"Good examples of pizzazz are the antics of one of my favorite cats, Little Awful Arnie. Arnie used to punish me for leaving him alone by taking each pair of pantythose soaking in the sink and stretching it from one room to the next. When you multiply this by ten dripping pairs—what a mess! He always played innocent, of course, looking at me wide-eyed from his favorite chair when I'd return.

"In fact, Arnie's reputation when he first went to shows was gained as much for his habit of scrambling upside-down monkey-fashion across the top of his cage as it was for his outstanding type.

"I believe those of us fortunate enough to be owned by a cat have indeed experienced the true meaning of love."

"A breeder must develop a distinctive look to his stock, produce offspring that can be recognized anywhere as coming from his cattery and be able to repeat this strain with reasonable regularity . . ."

You'll find the show you're looking for in CATS Show Calendar each month.